

Carers of Children with Special Needs

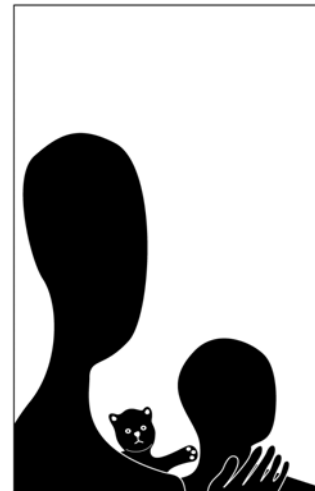
This leaflet contains specific additional information for parents of children with special needs. We outline some of the issues of relevance to parents and how to access the support and services you may need. This leaflet also contains information about key organisations in Lewisham that work with children with special needs and their families. Carers Lewisham provides services relevant for all carers regardless of who they are caring for.

STATUTORY EDUCATION ASSESSMENTS AND STATEMENTS

A Statutory Assessment is undertaken by Lewisham Children's Education Services and carried out by a group of individuals each with specialist skills to determine what a child's special **educational needs** are and what help will be required to meet those needs. When this assessment is complete children should have a written 'statement' and education plan which should be regularly monitored and reviewed. **Please note** that children with educational statements **will not automatically** be entitled to **help from the social care** side of the Lewisham Children's Service, such as respite, help in the home etc., the child or young person will have to meet their specific eligibility criteria.

Who can request an Assessment?

Parents, care workers, schools and pre-schools can request a Statutory Assessment if the child has profound, complex and long-term needs.



How can a request for an Assessment be made?

A parent should first discuss their concerns with the school. If these concerns continue a parent can contact:

Special Educational Needs

Laurence House, Catford Road, SE6 4SW

Tel: 020 8314 7041

E-mail: sen@lewisham.gov.uk

Assessment of needs

Before a decision can be reached about whether a child requires special educational provision, a careful and detailed assessment is made. This is carried out by a team of professional staff from different services. Parents are considered to be vital members of the team.

The assessment takes into account the child's

educational, medical, nursing, social and other needs and the information is carefully co-ordinated so that a judgement can be made as to whether or not a statement of special educational needs should be issued.

A group of professionals which includes head-teachers, an educational psychologist and representatives from health and social services has been set up to assist in determining whether or not a statement of special educational needs should be issued.

What happens next

Class or subject teachers identify or register a child's special educational needs and, in consultation with the school's special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO), take initial action.

The school's SENCO takes lead responsibility for gathering information and for co-ordinating the child's special educational provision, working with the child's teachers. This is put together in an individual education plan (IEP), which is reviewed after a period of time to see if the plan is working.

Teachers and the SENCO are supported by specialists from outside the school. These could be members of the education psychology service or learning support service, medical professionals and/or social services professionals. The IEP is further reviewed.

What is a Statement?

A statement of special educational needs is a legal document laying out the details of special needs which your child is considered to have after the assessment above.

The statement outlines the specific help which will be made available to meet your child's special needs. This is called special educational

provision. A statement of special educational needs is set out in six parts:

Part one - introduction

- the child's name and address and date of birth
- the child's home language and religion
- the names and address(es) of the child's parents

Part two - special educational needs

Details of each and every one of the child's special educational needs as identified by the Local Educational Authority (LEA) during statutory assessment from the advice received and attached as appendices to the statement.

Part three - special educational provision

- The special educational provision which the LEA considers necessary to meet the child's special educational needs.
- The objectives which the special educational provision should aim to meet.
- The special educational provision which the LEA considers appropriate to meet the needs specified in part two and to meet the specified objectives.
- The arrangements for monitoring progress in meeting those objectives, particularly for setting short-term targets for the child's progress on a regular basis.

Part four - placement

The type and name of school where the special educational provision specified in part three is to be made or the arrangements for the education to be made otherwise than in school.

Part five - non-educational needs

All relevant non-educational needs of the child as agreed between the Health Services, Social Services or other agencies and the LEA.

Part six - non-educational provision

Details of relevant non-educational provision which will be made available to meet the non-educational needs of the child as agreed between the Health Services and/or the Social

Care Services and Education, including the agreed arrangements for its provision.

What happens next?

If it has been decided to issue a 'statement of special educational needs', then you will first be sent a 'proposed statement'. All sections will be completed except part four (describing the type and name of the school) which is left blank.

Along with the copy of the proposed statement, you will receive a letter from the education service explaining how you can give your views on the proposed statement before a final statement is issued.

You will have 15 days in which to make any comments and express your preference of school you want for your child.

At this point you must read the document carefully to ensure the description of needs and the services to meet those needs are clear. If not ask for a meeting to discuss the revision of the statement.

Usually Lewisham will send you the final statement within eight weeks of issuing the proposed statement. You will be informed of your right of appeal against the authority's decision to an Independent Special Needs Tribunal if you do not agree with the final statement issued by the Authority.

An assessment should take no longer than six months. (There are exceptions to this time limit, such as when professional advice is received late).

SOCIAL CARE SERVICES

If your child, you as their carer, or the whole family, need practical help and support including breaks from caring, you will need to approach

the **Disabled Children's Service**

Tel: 0208 314 9501

You can have a **Children in Need Assessment** to see if you meet the service's **Eligibility Criteria. (Please note that not all children who have a Statement are entitled to social care services).** If you meet the eligibility criteria you are then entitled to a **Family Support Assessment** which will give you a number of points which can be translated into a range of services such as **House on the Hill** overnight respite; **Coombe House** day care; or other regular respite services. **NB** if your child is aged under 8 you are presently only entitled to half the points of an older child which translated into fewer services.

You as the carer are also entitled to a **Carers Assessment** which can lead to services to support you as a carer such as help with housework etc.

If your non disabled child/ren have to help out more than is usual at home and you are in anyway concerned about the impact on them of having a severely disabled sibling e.g. they are being bullied at school; have worries about bringing friends home; or are often worried about their family; your children may be entitled to use the support services provided by the **Carers Lewisham Young Carers Service**. We provide Saturday clubs; days/weekends away; support for families; help at school; homework help etc. For more information please contact Carers Lewisham **Tel: 0208 699 8686**

TRANSITION

The move from Child to Adult Services

For parents of children with special needs the transition period is always a worrying one. Your child is growing up and you have concerns

about what their future might hold.

At any one time Lewisham has around 1500 children who have 'special needs' who will need to be assessed for the kind of support they may need when moving in to adulthood. Their special needs can be anything from mild learning difficulties through to being severely mentally and or physically disabled.

Planning for this 'transition' has 4 elements:

Educational Opportunities, which are explored through Connexions

Community Support, through Social Care Services

Health Issues, through health professionals in schools

Social and Leisure opportunities, through local youth and voluntary sector groups.

TRANSITIONS PROCESS

For children with more severe disabilities Transitions planning should start at Year 9 when Children Services and the Transitions team are involved in school reviews

Adult services are involved in school reviews from Year 11.

In addition there are also termly meetings between Adult and Children's services to identify young people coming up for transition, their needs and which if any Adult Service may most appropriately meets their needs.

ELIGIBILITY

Connexions provides a service to ALL vulnerable young people.

To receive help from Social Care Services, the young person must meet the 'eligibility criteria' for the relevant service:

ADULT SOCIAL CARE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Learning Disability Service

To be able to use the adult Learning Disability Services the young person must have an IQ of less than 75 and either have been born with the disability or acquired it before the age of 5 years old.

Other Adult Services

The young person must either be in the 'Critical risk to independence' or 'Substantial risk to independence' categories:

Critical

- **Life is or will be threatened**
- **Significant health problems have developed or will develop**
- **There is or will be little or no choice and control over vital aspects of the immediate environment**
- **Serious abuse or neglect has occurred or will occur**
- **There is or will be an inability to carry out vital personal care or domestic routines**
- **Vital involvement in work, education or learning cannot or will not be sustained**
- **Vital social support systems and relationships cannot or will not be sustained**
- **Vital family and other social roles and responsibilities cannot or will not be undertaken.**

Substantial

- **There is or will be only partial choice and control over the immediate environment**
- **Abuse or neglect has occurred or will occur**
- **There is or will be an inability to carry out the majority of personal care or domestic routines**
- **Involvement in many aspects of work,**

education or learning cannot or will not be sustained

- **The majority of social support systems and relationships cannot or will not be sustained**
- **The majority of family and other social roles and responsibilities will not be undertaken.**

ISSUES

If your Young Person does not meet the above criteria they may still be entitled to access services in the voluntary sector, education and help with employment issues. Your Young Person's Connexions worker should help to arrange this.

Those parents who have children with very high needs may find that on moving to adult services less money is available for their Young Person's care package than when they were children and this causes huge difficulties for some parents. Parents may find that their only option is to go through the Social Services complaints process possibly right up to Judicial Review. Carers Lewisham can help with this at least with the initial complaints.

Also unfortunately there are some young people who have quite severe difficulties but who do not meet social services criteria for adults or learning disabilities services such as those with Asperger's Syndrome, ADHA, mild learning difficulties and some other mental health problems. Lewisham Social Services are presently looking at how they might address some of these issues but gaps will remain.

SOME USEFUL CONTACTS

Contact A Family

Services Provided: Primarily for carer/parents of children with special needs. Encourages mutual support by putting families in contact with

each other. Parents are actively involved in running the service and there is a weekly drop-in where parents can meet to discuss problems, socialise or access any information. Individual advice and support is also provided. Summer play-schemes are provided for 4-18 year olds, and there are outings and activities organised for the whole family. There are several specialised carers groups and a regular newsletter is sent out.

Access: Carer/parent or professional with consent.

Address: 1 Foreman House, Friendsbury Rd , Brockley, SE4 2LB.

Tel: 020 7635 6333

SIGNAL (Previously A.L.A.S. All Lewisham Autism Support)

Services Provided: Support for parent/carers of children diagnosed as coming within the autistic continuum and Asperger's Syndrome.

Access: Open referral

Tel: 020 8299 6736

Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus

Services Provided: Support for families where Hydrocephalus and Spina Bifida exist. Provide regular newsletter including information via national magazine "Link" every two months. There are grants for special needs including holidays for children. Holiday bungalow at Westgate-on-Sea open all year round for families. Home visits to families.

Access: Open referral

Address: 29, Wellmeadow Road, Lewisham, London, SE13 6SY

Tel: 020 8244 3526 or 020 8854 5828

Cystic Fibrosis Trust

Services Provided: All round advice and information, practical and emotional support for families with a child suffering from Cystic Fibrosis.

Access: Open referral

Address: 11 London Road, Bromley, Kent,
BR1 1BY

Tel: 020 8464 7211

Community Occupational Therapy

Services Provided: To improve the quality of life of disabled children and their carers by enabling them to increase their independence by; visiting individuals at home to assess need; assisting with the necessary and appropriate provision of equipment and adaptations; advice and information on issues related to disability; advising on re-housing and allocation of property of disabled people.

Access: Professional referral. There is a waiting list. (Covers all care groups).

Address: The Town Hall, Catford Road, Catford, SE6 4RM

Tel: 020 8314 7777

Crossroads

Services Provided: Home based respite care for the parents/carers of children and adults with special needs. Respite care in the home or outside dependent on parent/carers wishes.

Access: Referral through Social Services and nominated by Respite Care Team. There is a long waiting list. (Covers all care groups).

Address: 2a Wildfell Road, Catford, London, SE6 4HU

Tel: 020 8690 8554

Early Years Service

Services Provided: Access to Lewisham Portage Project, Lewisham Councils' Early Years Centre for children between 0-5 with special needs. They also run Summer Play Schemes for children with disabilities whose parents are in paid employment.

Access: Professional referral only

Address: Third Floor, Laurence House, 1 Catford Rd, London, SE6 4RU

Tel: 020 8314 6000

Education Enquiry Line

Tel: 020 8314 6200

Lewisham Parents Partnership Service

Services Provided: Information and support to parents of children with disabilities, particularly during assessments, reviews and appeals. Access to current information about parents rights especially where support is needed in terms of problems regarding mainstream education. There are 3-4 meetings a year with speakers and social events.

Access: Open referral.

Address: Room B Civic Suite, Lewisham Town Hall Catford, SE6 4RU

Tel: 020 8314 9458

Lewisham Portage Project

Services Provided: All year round home visiting service for pre-school children with special needs enabling carers/parents to become more effective teachers of their own children 0-5.

Access: Professional referral.

Address: Lewisham Portage, Rangefield School Site, Glenbow Road, Downham, Bromley, Kent, BR1 4RP

Tel: 020 8698 6001

Lewisham Autism Support

Services Provided: Advice and support to families who have a newly diagnosed child with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

Address: Based at Lewisham Carers Centre

Tel: 0208 699 3066

Lewisham Park

Services Provided: Lewisham Community Child and Family Service offering specialist support for children with mental health needs and their families.

Access: Ask your GP or Social Worker

Address: 78 Lewisham Park, SE13 6QT

Tel: 0208 609 1086

London Spastic Group

Services Provided : Advice, information and services to help individuals and parents.

Access: Open referral

Address: 12 Broadway Road, Catford, London, SE6 1NE

Tel: 020 8244 3147 (Home).

Special Educational Needs Assessments

Services Provided: Assess and provides statementing for children with Special Educational Needs. Help with mainstream and special school placements. Provides impartial advice regarding assessments and statements. A parent adviser is available.

Access: Open referral.

Address: Pupil Assessment & Placement Section, New Woodlands Centre, Shroffold Road, Downham, BR1 5PD

Tel: 020 8314 6470

Priory Manor Child Development Centre

Services Provided: Specialised assessments and treatment for children with special needs. Multi-disciplinary team approach including physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and health visiting. A booklet and video with all information on the services provided can be obtained from Priory Manor "A Guide to Services for Children with Special Needs."

Access: Open referral

Address: 1 Blagdon Road, Lewisham, SE13 7HL

Tel: 020 8690 3838

University Hospital Lewisham, Social Services Dept. – Children and Families.

Services Provided: Professional social work support specifically for children and families attending Lewisham Hospital or Priory Manor

Child Development Centre as outpatients.

Access: Therapist or medical staff. Parents can access the duty Social Worker Children and Families Team.

Address: Social Work Department, First Floor, Nursery Block, University Hospital Lewisham, Lewisham High Street, Lewisham, SE13 6LH

Tel: 020 8333 3000

Carers Lewisham

Services Provided: Please see other leaflets in this pack for more details. In addition we arrange a number of support networks; Coffee Mornings; a Challenging Behaviour Support Group; one off information and advice days (workshops) on a range of topics of interest to parent carers. Parent carers may also access our sitting services and access; help with accessing welfare benefits and services; counselling; massage and relaxation days; our holiday grants scheme etc. Our services are open to **ALL** parent carers as long as their child has a **medically diagnosed** condition including ADHA and Asperger's.

Also support services for children involve in caring for a family member **Carers Lewisham Young Carers Project.**

FOR ALL CARERS LEWISHAM SERVICES:

Access: Open Referral

Address: As before

Tel: 020 8699 8686